

1939 not far from our locality. Owing to an engagement at home, these two unfavourable nights were all that I could spare last year, and I fear that the coming season will not see our lights lit there. Food plant and habits still remain something of a mystery, but evidence is gradually accumulating, and before long this insect, which has for thirty odd years been a sadly neglected unknown quantity on the British list, may well be found to be a regular breeder in England on wide corn-lands.

When I had returned to Kent, visits were paid to Sandwich and the Ashford woods. Sugar was disappointing at Sandwich, only twenty species coming on the night of 9th August; and those who went to Dungeness reported that there, too, insects were scarce. And yet the year before the sugar had been plastered with moths all through August; one would like to know what factors govern plenty or scarcity at this or that attraction, not merely on a few isolated nights, but over the period of a month or two. The woods were more exciting; on 20th and 24th August *Agrotis agathina* was fairly common on a small patch of heather, and there were second broods of several Prominents. On the 20th, after a terrific thunderstorm, a male *Oconestis quadra* came to light—the third recent record for this part of Kent. Larvae of *Cucullia asteris* had all pupated by this time in these woods, but on the marsh at Ebbsfleet near Ramsgate a fine colony of monstrous larvae was found on the 23rd, feeding on *Aster tripolium*. Mr and Mrs Peyton, who visited the spot a few days later, found several larvae of *asteris* feeding gaily on *Artemisia*, a plant which I have not seen recorded as a food of this species.

After the end of the month, when my collecting came to a sad and early end, I did nothing of note. The Old Adam would not be denied on warm nights in October, and I went out for one or two murky expeditions armed with an umbrella and a stick, and assaulted the garden ivy, to little purpose. There is a poor consolation in the fact that August did not promise plentiful migrants in the autumn; one hopes that when hostilities are over, we shall be treated to a series of bumper years such as now occur only in our dreams.

SYNONYMY IN THE GENUS MYOPITES (DIPTERA, TRYPETIDAE).

By J. E. COLLIN, F.R.E.S., Etc.

Two distinct species of *Myopites* occur in this country, one with a comparatively short head, more predominantly yellow abdomen, and stigma of wing more extensively darkened, the larvae of which form galls in the flowerheads of *Pulicaria dysenterica* (though apparently only near the south coast); the other with a longer head having a more projecting epistoma, darker abdomen, and stigma only dark on about apical half, the larvae forming galls in the flowerheads of *Inula crithmoides*. No less than seven different names have at various times been used for one or the other of these two species, the latest being *M. eximia*, Seguy, used by Mr Niblett in the recent February number of this magazine, for the species from *Inula crithmoides*.

The following notes on the old descriptions and records were made as an attempt to clear up the synonymy of our two British species, and are now published in the hope that it may lead to the confirmation (or

otherwise), by those in a position to undertake the work, of certain doubtful points.

M. blotii, Breb. (1826), was described from specimens bred from larvae found in autumn and winter in the galled flowerheads of "*Inula dysenterica*" growing in marshes and other sea-coast situations in Normandy; the flies themselves were said to be very common on the flowers of this plant in July, August, and September. The description of the insect itself is valueless for purposes of identification but the biological details fit so well with our species, having a similar life-history, that we might use the name *M. blotii* with confidence for our species except for the fact that a species certainly distinct from ours (*M. inulae*, v. Ros.) was originally recorded as living in the same foodplant in Central Europe (see, however, the note under that species). It is noteworthy that the distribution of this species of *Myopites* in England coincides with the distribution of a closely allied plant, *Pulicaria vulgaris* (*Inula pulicaria*), and not with the distribution of *Pulicaria dysenterica*, but I am assured by those who have collected the galled seedheads in the Isle of Wight that the plant concerned was certainly *P. dysenterica*.

In 1833 Newman described a *Tephritis hebe* from a single specimen taken at Southgate by Mr F. Walker. This was redescribed and the wing figured by Walker in 1836 under the name *Sphenella signata*, Mg. The synonymy of *hebe*, Newm., with *signata*, Mg., was certainly incorrect, but the description and figure prove that the insect concerned was a *Myopites*, though it does not help in identifying the species. Walker appears to have seen other specimens in addition to Newman's type, because he gives the species as occurring "in the south of England during the summer; but not common"; he may, indeed, have had both our species before him, but the locality for the type specimen of *hebe* (Southgate) is a northern suburb of London, and of the known foodplants of the two British species of *Myopites* the only one likely to be found growing in that locality is *Pulicaria dysenterica*. It is probably correct, therefore, to infer that *T. hebe*, Newm., is a synonym of the species we know as *M. blotii*, Breb.

M. inulae, v. Ros. (1840), as redescribed by Loew in 1846 from specimens sent to him by v. Roser, is certainly a species distinct from our *M. blotii*, having particularly a longer female ovipositor. I possess Continental specimens and can confirm the distinction. According to Loew, this species was bred by v. Roser from "*Inula dysenterica*," but there may well have been a mistake over this food plant record. Frauenfeld* recorded breeding it "freely from *Inula hybrida*, occasionally from *I. ensifolia*, but never from *I. dysenterica*"; Schiner bred it freely from *I. ensifolia*, and there is no record, other than that of Loew, of the breeding of the species from *I. dysenterica*. The record of *M. inulae* as British is due to Fitch (*Entomologist*, xv, 1882, p. 138), but his species having been bred from *Inula crithmoides* must have been our *M. frauenfeldi*. The true *M. inulae* is not likely to be found in this country.

M. longirostris, Lw. (1846), was described from two males and one female from Sicily which were not bred, and the *M. longirostris* re-

*This record is incorrectly placed under the synonym "? *stylata*, F.," in Kertes's Catalogue.

corded by Frauenfeld as bred from *Inula viscosa* was not Loew's species of that name and was described as *M. limbardae* by Schiner. The references in Kertesz's Catalogue under *M. longirostris* to Schiner and Kaltenbach also relate to *M. limbardae* because they both refer to Frauenfeld's breeding record. Mr Niblett has established the fact that our species from *Inula crithmoides* is not *M. longirostris*, Lw., and it is most improbable that Loew's species will ever be found in this country.

M. frauenfeldi, Schin. (1864), and *M. eximia*, Seguy (1932).—It is certainly incorrect to sink *M. frauenfeldi*, Schin., as a synonym of *M. longirostris*, Lw. One has only to compare the descriptions given by Schiner for *frauenfeldi* and by Frauenfeld for the " ? *blotii* " which Schiner subsequently named *frauenfeldi*, with Loew's description of *longirostris*, to realise that they could not apply to the same species. *M. longirostris* is a more extensively yellow species, while *M. frauenfeldi* was described as having the very same darker colour characters used by Seguy for distinguishing his species *eximia*. So far as one can be certain without comparing types, our species from *Inula crithmoides*, Seguy's *eximia*, and Schiner's *frauenfeldi* (both bred also from this food-plant), are all the same species, which must be known as *M. frauenfeldi*, Schiner, the name under which I added it to the British List in 1910 (*Ent. Month. Mag.*, xlv, 174). The breeding of this species from *Inula crithmoides* in Britain was first recorded by Walker in 1871 (*Entomologist*, v, p. 450) under the name of *T. signata* Mg. (v. Fitch in *Entomologist*, xv, 1882, p. 138). Fitch called the species *M. inulae*, v. Ros., failing to recognise it as *M. frauenfeldi*, probably because Schiner included this latter species under his couplet "Flügelrandmal gelb," whereas the species really has the stigma yellowish about the base and darkened towards tip.

I have bred both of our British species in very large numbers and there is considerable variation in both species in wing markings and, to a certain extent, in colour; for instance, in *frauenfeldi* the legs, usually yellow, may be extensively tawny-brown, and the dark markings on abdominal tergites may be restricted to a pair of large isolated spots on each tergite, always larger than in *blotii*, and never approaching the very restricted (or even absent) markings of *longirostris*; in any case, the palest *frauenfeldi* can always be separated from the darkest *blotii* by the shape of the head, while the stigma of wings is always more extensively darkened in the latter than in the former.

THE MISUSE OF THE HOMONYM RULE.

Our colleague, Rev. Geo. Wheeler, has called attention to the absolutely unnecessary suggested replacement of the Erebiid name *arete* in that splendid book on the genus *Erebia* issued by the Trustees of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.). I have looked closely into this in connection with the Homonym Rule. This rule was formulated to obviate the redundant use of the same specific name in any circumstances where confusion as to the particular species might arise with another species labelled with the same name. The only control as to its use in every case should be "confusion" and nothing else.